

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny Hoyer released the following statement today in recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week.

“This week we pay tribute to some of the most important individuals in our nation: our educators. Teachers hold the future of America in their hands. They teach our children to read, to write, to calculate, to sing, to paint, to listen, to question, hopefully to work with others and think for themselves. Most of us owe our teachers a great debt, not only for our education in the classroom, but for inspiring and encouraging us to be and do better. I hope Marylanders will join me in honoring Maryland’s teachers and recognizing the lasting contributions they make to our communities.

“President Clinton once said, ‘the role of teachers, while hard to exaggerate, unfortunately, is too often easy to overlook.’ Luckily, organizations like the Milken Family Foundation are working to correct this lack of recognition for our teachers. This year I joined the Milken Foundation on Capitol Hill in recognizing two outstanding educators from Maryland who were named as recipients of the 2005 Milken National Educator Award: Anthony Whittington from Forestville, who teaches at Longfields Elementary School, and Deidre Austen from Lutherville, who teaches at Lutherville Laboratory School. Each Milken National Award includes an unrestricted \$25,000 prize and participation in annual professional development conferences. This award is well deserved by these two impressive educators and I join our state in saluting them and expressing our gratitude for their contributions to our community.

“Teachers and educators across our country are faced with many challenges including insufficient resources and exploding school enrollments leading to overcrowded classrooms. Further, record numbers of teachers are or will soon be at retirement. However, when our finest young people pass up teaching as a worthwhile future, they’re missing out on rewarding careers, and we’re missing the opportunity to ensure that we are as prepared as possible for an increasingly global economy that demands a highly skilled workforce.

“Today, I will sit down with education advocates including Jayne Moore, the Education Technology director for the state of Maryland, to discuss the Bush Administration’s proposal to eliminate the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Program, which was part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This program provides Maryland’s only source of technology funding, and Maryland uses these funds in part to assist teachers in meeting NCLB’s highly qualified teacher requirements. The NCLB law was a true bipartisan achievement and I reject the President’s elimination of this program at a time when ensuring that educators have the technology and resources they need is the key to 21st Century success.

“America must give teachers the right tools and rewards – a livable salary, safe classrooms, and sufficient resources for quality instruction – if they are to meet the high expectations we’ve set. If we do not, we are putting the future of America’s children at risk. This week, I encourage you to thank our teachers for the life changing work that they do.”

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